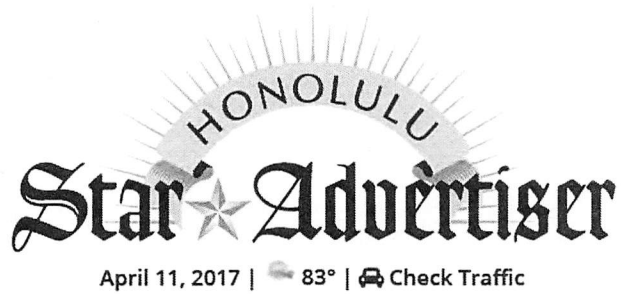


Exhibit 8

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Kealoha to retire as HPD chief in wake of federal p.



Top News

Kealoha to retire as HPD chief in wake of federal probe

By Gordon Y.K. Pang

Posted January 06, 2017

January 6, 2017

Updated January 6, 2017 5:35pm



DENNIS ODA / DODA@STARADVERTISER.COM

Police Commission Chairman Max Sword announced today that Honolulu Police Chief Louis Kealoha will retire.

Honolulu Police Chief Louis Kealoha has agreed to retire in the wake of a federal corruption investigation, ending a 33-year career on the police force.

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The decision was announced early this afternoon by Police Commission Chairman Max Sword at the Honolulu Police Department's Beretania Street headquarters after a closed-door meeting on the chief's fate. Sword said the seven-member commission, which has the authority to hire and fire the chief, came to "an agreement in principle" with Kealoha on his retirement.

A police spokeswoman said Kealoha was not at today's closed-door meeting as was expected.

"We are working the details out and we'll have the final approval by the commission on the meeting on ... Jan. 18," Sword said after the hour-long meeting.

Kealoha was a captain in 2009 when he was picked by the commission to replace Boisse Correa as chief of the 2,000-officer force. After contentious relations between Correa and the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers, SHOPO leaders applauded Kealoha's selection.

Sword spoke with reporters outside the building with Corporation Counsel Donna Leong, the city's top civil attorney, standing next to him. She did not address the media.

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Sword thanked the chief for his more than 30 years with HPD, adding that the commission wished "him well in his retirement."

Kealoha has been the subject of a lengthy federal grand jury investigation into alleged wrongdoing and corruption. On Dec. 20, Kealoha placed himself on "restriction of police authority" status shortly after the FBI sent him a letter informing him that he was the target of a criminal investigation.

The commission discussed Kealoha's fate in executive session for more than two hours Wednesday before deciding to recess. Sword told reporters afterward that he and his colleagues wanted time to gather additional information but he declined to provide specifics.

On Wednesday, the commission affirmed his "on leave" status and made it indefinite. Deputy Chief Cary Okimoto has been acting chief since then. Okimoto has 32 years with HPD and served as its deputy chief for administrative operations since 2015.

After Sword's announcement today, HPD issued a written statement, saying, "Under the leadership of Acting Chief Cary Okimoto, HPD will work to ensure seamless continuity of the essential functions that make Honolulu one of the safest major cities

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in the country. The safety and security of our community has always been, and will continue to be, HPD's top priority."

Attorney Myles Breiner, who has represented Kealoha on the criminal allegations against him, referred questions to Kevin Sumida, who is providing the chief with legal counsel on civil matters including the settlement that is leading to his retirement.

"I'm disappointed that the chief retired but I understand why," Breiner said by telephone after Sword's announcement. "I support his decision; it still preserves the integrity of the Police Department. There's been no admission or acknowledgement of any wrongdoing whatsoever because there's been no wrongdoing."

Sumida could not immediately be reached for comment.

Four other HPD officers also were put on "restriction of police authority," or ROPA, status as a result of receiving similar letters. Their names have not been disclosed by the department.

A federal grand jury has been looking into corruption and other wrongdoing at HPD stemming from the theft of the mailbox at Kealoha's Kahala home. The chief and his wife, Katherine Kealoha, a city prosecutor, are widely believed to be at the center of the investigation.

In June, the Kealohas filed a lawsuit against the city Ethics Commission claiming that former Executive Director Chuck Totto and commission staff unfairly investigated them.

It's unclear whether the terms of the retirement settlement will affect those matters.

Mayor Kirk Caldwell, who was ill and out of the office today, issued a statement thanking Kealoha for his years of service and the commission "for taking decisive action on this matter."

"I believe the Commission made the right decision to accept Chief Kealoha's retirement, and he made the correct decision for the sake of the police department and the thousands of officers who serve with integrity, respect and fairness," the mayor said, adding, "Today's announcement allows the Honolulu Police Department to move forward."

SHOPO president Tenari Ma'afala, a 32-year police veteran who has known Kealoha since before their time at HPD, said he respects the chief's decision.

"If you ask me, and this is not indicative of his decision, if I was in his shoes, and I knew for certain I didn't do anything wrong, I would leave on my terms," Ma'afala said, stressing that he did not know if Kealoha left voluntarily or not.

"For selfish reasons, I hate to see him leave," he said, adding that he hopes Kealoha's actions reflect what's best for his family.

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During the public portion of Wednesday's commission meeting, several people urged the commission members to reconsider their decision to hold the Kealoha discussion behind closed doors. But commission members said they wanted to go into executive session with its attorneys to discuss the personnel matter.

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